



Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention

Preventing foodborne illness through research, education, advocacy and service

Honorable Rosa DeLauro
U.S. House of Representatives
2413 Rayburn Building
Washington, D.C. 20215

February 4, 2009

Dear Congresswoman DeLauro,

Food safety in America has suffered multiple challenges over the past several years: *E. coli* O157:H7 in spinach, *Listeria monocytogenes* in mushrooms, *Salmonella* in peppers/tomatoes and melamine in imported products. Now, as the recent peanut butter-*Salmonella* recall shows, an “ingredient” outbreak can become staggering, with the most recent report listing over 1,000 recalled products. In addition to these financial losses, CDC reports that each year in the United States an estimated 1.4 million Americans suffer a *Salmonella* infection and over 400 die. According to a 2001 USDA’s Economic Research Service report, salmonellosis costs the country an estimated \$2.9 billion each year, but this calculation does not include the negative financial and health impact that emerging, multi-drug resistant strains of *Salmonella* may have in the future.

In November 2008, the Government Accountability Office identified food safety as one of the “13 Urgent Issues” facing President Obama and 111th Congress. Obviously, a new approach to food safety is needed if we are going to meet the challenges of America’s growing population, and the realities of a global food supply. The *Food Safety Modernization Act* addresses some of the major challenges facing food oversight in America. Our country needs to replace its fragmented food safety system with one that has the authority to establish a risk-based inspection system, enforce performance standards, certify imports, trace contaminated products back to their source, mandate recalls and impose civil penalties, as well as conduct research on foodborne illness and best agricultural/processing practices for all sectors of the food industry. We believe this legislation offers workable solutions, which if enacted, will help stem the increasing and dangerous tide of food safety recalls and outbreaks.

CFI congratulates you on your vision to develop the *Food Safety Modernization Act* and is pleased to endorse this bill.

Sincerely,

Patricia Buck

Patricia Buck
CFI Executive Director